

Appendix A – The Planning Process

INTRODUCTION

Rockville's Pike: Envision a Great Place is the product of an intensive community planning initiative that has incorporated input from citizens, private and public sector leaders, government agencies, consultants, staff and other stakeholders.

Strong public involvement was a major component of the plan process from the beginning and has been central to the development of *Rockville's Pike*. Extensive outreach and publicity efforts were made throughout the planning process to maximize public knowledge about, and participation in, development of the plan. Press releases, mailings, listserve messages, social media posts, flier distribution, posters at community facilities, articles in Rockville Reports, programs on Rockville 11, and regular updates to the project Web site were all employed to encourage collaborative understanding and information-sharing among citizens, other stakeholders, City staff and the consultants. In addition, staff met with property owners, neighborhood and community groups, organizations, and City boards and commissions before and after release of the consultants' draft plan.

This appendix summarizes the *Rockville's Pike* planning process, including the wide variety of public meetings and activities that engaged staff, consultants, stakeholders, and citizens in the creation of the plan.

CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS

In May 2006, Rockville's Mayor and Council identified a vision of the City in 2020, along with associated two-year priorities for guiding the City's policies and decisions. Under the vision element of an "Exceptional Built Environment", one priority was to complete master planning for Rockville Pike.

Following this direction from the Mayor and Council, staff advertised a Request for Proposal (RFP) in October 2006 for consulting services to assist with the update of the 1989 Rockville Pike Corridor Neighborhood Plan. The RFP also provided for new key elements, including an extensive public involvement process.

The Request for Proposal was advertised nationwide, posted on the American Planning Association (APA) Web site and mailed to 88 consultant firms. The RFP response deadline was December 8, 2006. A pre-proposal interview meeting was held on November 14, 2006 at which City staff briefed interested consultants on the project. Bids were received from six firms.

A four-member citizen group of property owners and residents was established to serve on the consultant selection team. A seven-member staff team from different City departments was also assembled. The staff team used evaluation criteria from the RFP to select the top four candidates.

Interviews were conducted on January 8 and 9, 2007. The four finalists were evaluated and ranked by the citizen and staff committees based on experience and technical qualifications (80%) and cost of services (20%). The consultant team of ACP Visioning + Planning was selected as lead project manager, with Economics Research Associates (ERA) for economic and market analysis support and Glatting Jackson Kerscher Anglin (later part of AECOM) for transportation support. Kim Littleton also became part of the selected consulting team to develop the form based code that was included as part of the consultant draft plan.

EARLY PREPARATION

As with any planning effort, one of the first steps was to familiarize the consultant team with the study area. An initial orientation meeting with City staff and consultants was held in September 2007. This day-long meeting included a bus and walking tour of the Pike. Staff members shared plans and studies relevant to the Pike and its surrounding neighborhoods, as well as information on proposed new developments such as Twinbrook Station.



Throughout the fall of 2007, the consultant team worked closely with Rockville staff to develop a project identity (see the logo developed by the City on the left) and to build community awareness about the upcoming planning process.

THE CONSULTANT-LED PUBLIC PROCESS

In order to gather input and test ideas with the public, numerous meetings were held by the consulting team and staff over a period of seven months between December 2007 and June 2008. These meetings were open to everyone who lives, works, shops, or has other interests in Rockville and were consistently well-attended. Participation at each public meeting ranged from about 65 to 150 people, indicating a strong community interest in the future of the Pike. Throughout the process, all ideas from the public were carefully documented, posted on the project Web-site, and used to inform the development of the plan.

The *Rockville's Pike* public process presented an opportunity to unify technical input with intuitive local knowledge. The consultant team shared the technical findings - outlined in Chapter 2: Key Findings - at various public meetings, giving participants a chance to learn more about how their community functions in terms of land use, transportation, and market conditions. Small group discussions and facilitated activities gave community members a chance to use this information to generate more informed recommendations about the future of the Pike. Through a process of joint discovery, the public, consultant team, and staff identified a set of planning principles that served as the foundation for design work and effectively captured the community's vision for the Pike.

Exit questionnaires distributed at each meeting tracked demographic representation and helped the City tailor its outreach strategies accordingly. In some cases, the City intensified its efforts to reach out to underrepresented groups. For example, field surveys were conducted to gain input from bus riders, who were seen as less likely to participate in evening meetings due to limited public transportation service.

A summary of the consultant-led public process follows:

1. Stakeholder Interviews

The consultants conducted a series of stakeholder interviews in November and December 2007 to gain a better understanding of critical issues and community perceptions and attitudes related to Rockville Pike. The interviews were also used to encourage the participation of key interest groups.

Stakeholders interviewed included representatives from: City departments, the development community, regional agencies (such as Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and State Highway Administration), property and business owners, neighborhood and civic associations, Rockville citizen commissions (including the Planning, Historic District, and Human Services Commissions), and a group of Richard Montgomery High School students. The Mayor, all members of the City Council, and the City Manager were also interviewed individually.

The interviews produced three key outcomes. First, they provided the consultant with an initial understanding of the opportunities and challenges that the plan should address. Second, they illustrated the variety of ideas, perceptions, and attitudes that exist concerning the Pike. Finally, they identified a set of critical issues and questions that were later tested during the *Rockville's Pike* kick-off meeting.

2. Kick-Off Meeting

The kick-off meeting took place on December 4, 2007. The purpose of the meeting was to initiate a dialogue between the public and the consultant team, share ideas, and highlight critical issues to be addressed in order to lay the groundwork for the project.

The meeting consisted of three main parts: a general presentation by consultants on transportation, economics, urban design, and development regulations; small group table dialogues that allowed participants to brainstorm on critical issues that were identified through the stakeholder interviews and offer ideas on how to address them; and a question and answer session with the consultant team.



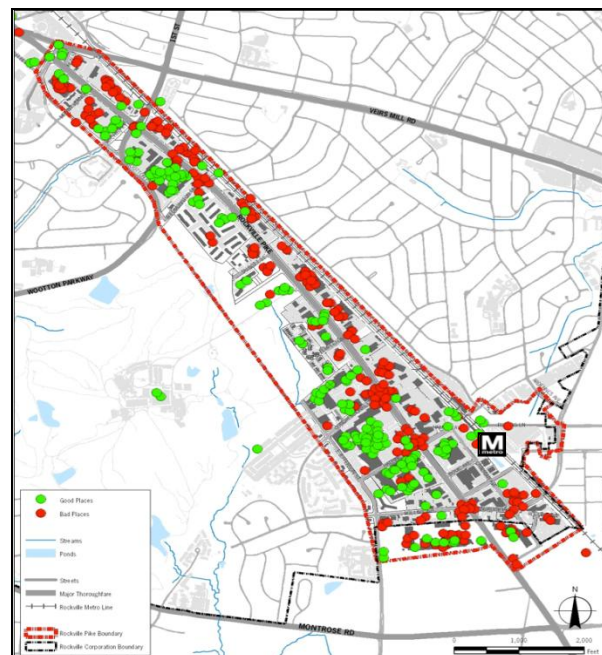
Figure A.1: The Kick-Off Meeting
participants listen to the kick-off presentation.

3. Stakeholder Workshop

The stakeholder workshop took place on February 26, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to identify physical strengths and weaknesses along the Pike and test issues that emerged from public input at the kick-off meeting.

Activities at the stakeholder workshop included: an overview of the major themes that emerged from the kick-off meeting; a small group exercise known as *Good Places, Bad Places* which engaged participants in mapping physical strengths and weaknesses along the Pike; a facilitated discussion about critical questions; and a reporting period that allowed each small group to present results of their activities.

Figure A.2: Good Places, Bad Places Map – This image shows the composite allocation of dots from the Good Places, Bad Places exercise. Participants placed green dots on the maps to indicate “good places” and red dots on the map to indicate “bad places.” Then, trained facilitators at each table led a discussion to identify the physical characteristics that make good places “good” or bad places “bad.” The detailed input on physical characteristics helped to inform the creation of a first draft of planning principles for the Pike.
Source: ACP



4. Reports to the Community

The kick-off meeting and the stakeholder workshop both emphasized small group activities, designed to elicit extensive input from the public about their ideas and their vision for the future of the Pike. The two subsequent public meetings, called Reports to the Community, placed more emphasis on providing detailed presentations about the consultant team's work. Reports to the Community gave the consultants opportunities to share the preliminary results of their technical research and analysis and receive additional feedback from the public.

a. First Report to the Community: Transportation and Land Use

The first Report to the Community took place on March 18, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to present an analysis of existing transportation and land use conditions along the Pike. The presentation included a history of development along the Pike, and an analysis of existing conditions, including issues such as connectivity, traffic congestion, safety, walkability, transit, and land use patterns.

The meeting also presented an opportunity to review the results of the *Good Places, Bad Places* exercise, present draft planning principles based on input from the first two public meetings, and allow participants to rate the importance of each of the draft principles on a scale from 1 to 5.

b. Second Report to the Community: Economics

The second Report to the Community took place on May 6, 2008. The focus of this meeting was the economic and market conditions of the Pike. The consultant team highlighted key findings about economic conditions, discussed potential market demand for residential, retail, and office uses, and introduced the idea of identifying "model sites", i.e., sites that have the potential to simulate the plan's recommendation. "Model sites" were investigated during the course of the charrette, as described in Section 5, below.

5. The Community Design Charrette

A charrette is a planning technique that has been widely applied throughout the world. It brings together and engages the multi-disciplinary talents and energies of community members, consultants, city staff, and all interested parties in a creative, intensive planning effort over a compressed period of time. This use of the term is said to originate from L'École des Beaux-Arts in Paris during the 19th century, where proctors circulated a cart, or charrette, to collect drawings from students as they worked hard to meet their exam deadlines.

The *Rockville's Pike* community design charrette was tailored to provide the widest range of opportunities for public input over a short period of time. It built upon the months of earlier public engagement described above, which provided a solid foundation of technical analysis, as well as publicly endorsed development principles that would inform the plan for the Pike. This section describes each of the major charrette activities.

a. First Public Meeting: Public Design Workshop



Figure A.3: The Design Workshop –
Trained facilitators at the design workshop helped participants express their ideas on a large map.

The first charrette event was a public design workshop held on May 31, 2008. The workshop began with a presentation that provided an overview of the *Rockville's Pike* process. Next, participants completed a visual survey to provide input on physical design issues.

The central activity of the public design workshop was a facilitated mapping exercise. Each table was randomly assigned to investigate one portion of the Pike, either the *North, Middle, or South* section.

Participants received prompt sheets that encouraged them to consider road network and connectivity, type and intensity of land use, and green infrastructure and public spaces. A trained facilitator at each table helped to transfer participants' ideas onto the map. Participants were also encouraged to draw and describe their ideas directly on the map, and the exercise resulted in a collaborative design plan from each table.

The meeting ended with a reporting period in which each table presented their map and the results of their design exercise. There was a great deal of consistency across the eight tables, and the ideas gathered through this exercise provided a foundation for the consultant team's work at the design studio for the remainder of the charrette.

b. Design Studio

The design studio is the creative center of any charrette—a place where consultants collaborate with staff, stakeholders, and members of the public to formulate design solutions over a condensed period of time. The *Rockville's Pike* design studio was located at 718 Rockville Pike, the site of the former Koons Ford dealership. The team conducted the design studio from the afternoon of Saturday, May 31 through Tuesday, June 3.

At the studio, City staff members were engaged to share data and provide clarity on conditions and policies that affect the Pike and surrounding neighborhoods. Meetings were held with the development community and owners of potential model sites to help envision the types of redevelopment that would be appropriate for various portions of the Pike. The team also met with representatives from regional agencies, including the Maryland Department of Transportation, Montgomery County Park and Planning, and Ride On. Members of the public stopped by the studio regularly to check on the progress of the effort and offer comments and ideas.

On Sunday, June 1, visitors to the studio were invited to join the consultant team and City staff on a walking audit where they explored first-hand some of the conditions, challenges, and possible solutions regarding transportation and land use in the South Pike. Ultimately, the design studio was a place of continuous, collaborative activity where everyone worked together to develop design solutions for the Pike

A significant product of the design studio was a drawing that illustrated at-a-glance the depth and breadth of the changes proposed in transforming the Rockville Pike into a multi-way boulevard. Drawn at the 50-scale, it measured over 13 feet and it became the centerpiece of discussion among studio visitors. The drawing, divided in two parts because of its size, is shown on the next page in its original version.



Figure A.4: The Walking Audit – Charrette team and community members meet at the design studio before the walking audit.

c. Open House

An Open House was hosted at the design studio on Monday, June 2 and provided an opportunity for the public to check in on the emerging design for the Pike, and offer input that would guide refinements during the last day of the charrette.

d. Final Public Meeting: Charrette Results – A Report to the Community

The final public event of the charrette was a presentation of the results. This meeting served as the third Report to the Community. The consultant team highlighted key aspects of the charrette design work, including a plan to transform the Pike itself into a green, multi-way boulevard.

Overall, participants were very supportive of the new vision for the Pike. A comment card was distributed in which participants were asked one simple question: “Are we on the right track?” In tallying the results, it was encouraging to see that 88 percent of respondents said “yes”, 12 percent were “unsure”, and zero percent of respondents felt that the design was “off-track”. This level of confidence in the design concepts and preliminary plan was a direct result of a process that: 1) allowed for ongoing feedback to balance technical findings and local knowledge, and 2) adhered to sound, publicly accepted development principles.

DRAFT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

Staff reviewed two preliminary drafts received from the consulting team in 2008-2009. Staff provided the consultants with comments on each draft in order to clarify information and recommendations, and expand on technical analyses. Based on findings contained in those drafts, staff requested further analysis in order to understand the practical limits of plan implementation under current systems of review and infrastructure concurrency requirements. The third consultant draft included a technical memorandum entitled *Critical Lane Volume*

Figure A.5: Plan View of the of the Rockville Pike's Multi-Way Boulevard –The image shows the 14-foot drawing created during the charrette. It shows on the left the northern portion of the proposed boulevard from Richard Montgomery Drive (top of the drawing) to the entrance to the Woodmont Country Club (bottom of the drawing). It shows on the right the southern portion of the proposed boulevard from the entrance to the Woodmont Country Club (top of the drawing) to Bou Avenue (bottom of the drawing). Source: AECOM



Staff Draft for Planning Commission Review

Analysis from Current Traffic and Approved Development on Rockville Pike, that was prepared by the subcontractor AECOM in November 2010.

The consultants' third and final draft of *Rockville's Pike: Envision a Great Place* was released to the public on December 29, 2010 and the Public Record was opened. The draft was posted on the City's Web site and distributed on CDs upon request. Printed copies were made available for reviewing at the Rockville and Twinbrook Public Libraries and at City Hall.

On January 5, 2011, staff sent the draft to the State of Maryland Clearinghouse, Montgomery County, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), the City of Gaithersburg, and other relevant agencies to start the State-mandated Article 66B process, which governs amendments to a City's Master Plan.¹

The consultant team presented its draft plan to a joint session of the Mayor and Council and the Planning Commission on January 10, 2011. On the following evening, staff and the consultants held an open house with exhibits at Richard Montgomery High School, which was immediately followed by a presentation for the public.

On February 9, 2011, Kim Littleton, the member of the consulting team who was primarily responsible for writing the draft form based code recommended by the consultants' draft plan to regulate development in the Rockville Pike corridor, gave two presentations: one for the public and a second to the Planning Commission.

To help Rockville citizens and others understand the consultants' draft so that they would be prepared to provide input through testimony, staff attended meetings of all neighborhood and community groups, organizations, City boards and commissions, and public agencies that expressed interest in discussing the plan. Staff also met with individual citizens and property owners upon request.

Community and neighborhood groups included: Americana Centre Condominium Association, East Rockville Civic Association, King Farm Citizens' Association, Lincoln Park Civic Association, New Mark Commons Homeowners' Association, Twinbrook Citizens Association, Victoria Condominium Association, West End Citizens Association, and Woodley Gardens Civic Association.

Organizations included: Rockville Chamber of Commerce, Rockville Economic Development, Inc., Rockville Housing Enterprises, Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Group, White Flint Implementation Advisory Group, and Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee.

City Boards and Commissions included: Environment Commission, Historic District Commission, Human Services Advisory Commission, Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, Traffic and Transportation Commission, and Senior Citizens Commission,

Public Agencies included: Maryland Department of Transportation, Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Maryland-

¹ Article 66B has since been reorganized into Chapter 426 in the Annotated Code of Maryland.

National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the Montgomery County Executive Office.

PLANNING COMMISSION PROCESS AND DRAFT

The Planning Commission began its work on the plan in March 2011 by holding two public hearings and reviewing all written testimony as it was submitted. The Public Record was held open for nine months until September 30, 2011. It yielded 130 items of testimony that were posted on the City's Web site along with other information about the planning process and the draft plan.

Planning Commission work sessions began in April 2011. Twenty-six work sessions were held on the plan vision, covering a wide range of transportation, land use, and zoning topics, and other issues raised in testimony. Members of the consulting team, as well as experts in such fields as mixed-use development, project and infrastructure financing, transit, form-based codes, urban design, and economic development participated in some of these sessions. A presentation on Rapid Transit Vehicles (RTV) was also provided to a joint session of the Mayor and Council and the Planning Commission during the work session time frame.

The Planning Commission meeting schedule was as follows:

Work session #	Discussion Topic	Date
	Public Hearing on consultant draft	3/09/11
	Public Hearing on consultant draft	3/16/11
1	Process & Corridor Planning Principles	4/27/11
2	Transportation – with consultant participation (AECOM)	5/11/11
3	Corridor Planning Principles	5/25/11
4	Transportation - with regional public agencies	6/08/11
	Montgomery County Transit Task Force presentation on rapid transit and Rapid Transit Vehicle system to Mayor & Council and Planning Commission	6/20/11
5	Boulevard design; Corridor Planning Principles	6/22/11
6	Boulevard design	7/13/11
7	Street network & other transportation issues	7/27/11
8	Land use & zoning	9/14/11
9	Development, economics, project finance – with expert panel	9/28/11
	Public record closed	9/30/11
10	Zoning – with consultants	10/12/11
11	Zoning – building form standards	10/26/11
12	Zoning – building form standards	11/09/11
13	Infrastructure finance – with Holland & Knight, City lobbyists	12/14/11
14	Zoning – building form standards	01/11/12
15	Architectural standards, parking, land uses	01/25/12
16	Jefferson & Fleet Street extensions	02/08/12
17	Zoning, architecture	02/22/12

Staff Draft for Planning Commission Review

18	Vision discussion - with Roger K. Lewis, architect, planner & Washington Post columnist	03/14/12
19	Follow-up to vision discussion	03/21/12
20	Parks & open space	03/28/12
21	Sidewalks	04/11/12
22	Jefferson & Fleet Street extensions, building height incentives	04/25/12
23	Boulevard & other street design	07/25/12
24	Code administration	09/12/12
25	Phasing	10/24/12
26	Implementation chapter	12/12/12

Based on Planning Commission direction throughout the course of the work sessions, staff revised the draft plan. Per the Commission's direction, the Public Record will be re-opened. The Planning Commission will review the new testimony, make changes to the draft, and finalize its recommendation to the Mayor and Council.

ANTICIPATED MAYOR AND COUNCIL PROCESS

A Mayor and Council Public Hearing is expected to be scheduled soon after the Planning Commission draft is made available to the public. The public record will be left open for a period of time, to be determined by the Mayor and Council, to collect feedback from the community. Staff will continue to be available to meet with neighborhood and community groups, organizations, City boards and commissions, and individuals to discuss the revised draft.

It is anticipated that the Mayor and Council will hold several work sessions to consider the public testimony before giving directions to staff. Staff will then revise the Planning Commission documents per the Mayor and Council's instructions. The schedule for adopting the plan, and the accompanying zoning document, will be determined by the Mayor and Council.